

8. Glories of the holy name

prayenalpayusah sabhya / kalav asmin yuge janah

mandah sumanda-matayo / manda-bhagya hy upadrutah (S.B. 1.1.10)

"O learned one, in this iron age of Kali men have but short lives. They are quarrelsome, lazy, misguided, unlucky and, above all, always disturbed."

The people in this age are very short-lived and slow in understanding spiritual life. Actually, human life is meant for understanding spiritual values, but because everyone in this age is a sudra, no one is interested. People have forgotten life's real purpose. The word manda means both slow and bad, and everyone in this age is either bad or slow or a combination of both. People are unfortunate and disturbed by so many things. According to Srimad-Bhagavatam there will eventually be no rain and consequently a scarcity of food. The governments will also levy very heavy taxes. The characteristics of this age predicted by Srimad-Bhagavatam are already being experienced to some degree. Since Kali-yuga is a very miserable age, Caitanya Mahaprabhu, who is Sri Krsna Himself, advises everyone simply to chant Hare Krsna.

Although God has given us all facilities to live peacefully on this earth, cultivate Krsna consciousness, and finally to come to Him, in this age we're unfortunate. We are short-lived, and there are so many people without food, shelter, married life or defense from the onslaughts of nature. This is due to the influence of this age of Kali. Therefore Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, seeing the dreadful situation in this age, emphasized the absolute necessity for cultivating spiritual life.

The Hare Krsna mantra is specifically mentioned in many Upanisads, such as the Kali-santarana Upanisad, where it is said:

hare krsna hare krsna / krsna krsna hare hare

hare rama hare rama / rama rama hare hare

itisodasakam namnam / kali-kalmasa-nasanam

natah parataropayah / sarva-vedesu drsyate

"After searching through all the Vedic literature one cannot find a method of religion more sublime for this age than the chanting of Hare Krsna."

"My dear King, although Kali-yuga is full of faults, there is still one good quality about this age. It is that simply by chanting the Hare Krsna maha-mantra, one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom." (SB 12.3.51)

The universal religious practice for the Kali-yuga is the chanting of the holy name.

The religious practice for the age of Kali is to broadcast the glories of the holy name. Only for this purpose has the Lord, in a yellow color, descended as Lord Caitanya.

In this age of Kali the practical system of religion for everyone is the chanting of the name of Godhead. This was introduced in this age by Lord Caitanya. Bhakti-yoga actually begins with the chanting of the holy name, as confirmed by Madhvacarya in his commentary on the Mundaka Upanisad. He quotes this verse from the Narayana-samhita:

dvapariyair janair visnuh / pancaratrais tu kevalaih

kalau tu nama-matreṇa / puṇyate bhagavan hariḥ

"In the Dvapara-yuga people should worship Lord Visnu only by the regulative principles of the Narada-pancaratra and other such authorized books. In the age of Kali, however, people should simply chant the holy names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi-līlā 3.40)

In Kali-yuga, simply by chanting the holy name one can attain the goal of life.

[Karabhajana Rsi to Maharaja Nimi]:

" 'Those who are advanced and highly qualified and are interested in the essence of life know the good qualities of Kali-yuga. Such people worship the age of Kali because in this age, simply by chanting the Hare Krsna maha-mantra, one can advance in spiritual knowledge and attain life's goal.' " (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.5.36)

Discovery:

1. What is the name of the present *yuga*? What are the qualities of people in this age?
2. What is the one good quality of this age?
3. In which *upanishad* is the Hare Krsna *Maha-mantra* mentioned? Why is it so important in this age?

Understanding:

1. What other methods of self-realization do you know about?
2. Why is chanting of Hare Krsna the most sublime method?

Application:

Do you believe that the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* will help you on the path to life's goal? How do you plan to implement this method in your life?

SRI NAMAMRTA

Method of Chanting the Holy Name

The chanting of the holy name is not, however, a mechanical process depending merely upon contemplative prowess. It is a devotional art, a form of prayer, and thus one must chant with reverence and devotion. The Hare Krsna mantra is a prayer for protection and deliverance, a prayer to the Lord for His divine presence and for the opportunity to serve Him. Chanting is compared to the helpless cry of a child for its mother. It is a prayer from the core of the repentant heart. It is chanted, therefore, in humility. Once, in a state of devotional ecstasy while in the company of two close followers (Svarupa Damodara Gosvami and Ramananda Raya), Sri Caitanya described the quintessential importance of chanting with the mood of humility. He said, "One who thinks himself lower than the grass, who is more tolerant than a tree, and who does not expect personal honor but is always prepared to give all respect to others can very easily always chant the holy name of the Lord." Commenting upon this famous verse, Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, author of *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta*, declares, "Everyone please hear me! String this verse on the thread of the holy name and wear it on your neck for continuous remembrance. One must strictly follow the principles given by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu in this verse. If one simply does so, certainly he will achieve the ultimate goal of life, the lotus feet of Sri Krsna."

(*Sri Namamrta* – Introduction)

PREACHING IS THE ESSENCE

Unless one is empowered by the Lord, one cannot spread the holy names throughout the world:

To deliver people in regions throughout the Universe who could not meet Him, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally entered the bodies of pure devotees. Thus He empowered living beings His pure devotees by manifesting in them so much of His own devotion that people in all other countries became devotees by seeing them.

Unless one is empowered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, one cannot spread the holy names of the Hare Krsna mahā-mantra throughout the world. Persons who do so are empowered. So they are sometimes called *āveśa-avatāras* or incarnations, for they are endowed with the power of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

(CC Antya 2.14)

Devotees must chant the Pañca-tattva mahā-mantra before every preaching function:

We must strictly follow the principle of offering our respects to the Pañca-tattva, as summarized in the mantra—*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*. At the beginning of every function in preaching, especially before chanting the Hare Krsna mahā-mantra ... we must chant the *Pañca-tattva*'s names and offer our respects to them.

(CC Aadi 8.4)